



Center for the Evangelical United Brethren Heritage TELESCOPE - MESSENGER

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The Church Harp: Early music of the United Brethren Church

By Millard J. Miller

During these days when we are enjoying the beauty and excellence of the first hymnal of The United Methodist Church, it may be of interest to consider the first hymnal of the former United Brethren Church, *The Church Harp*, published in 1841.

It has been said that the Protestant Reformation was born with a song in its heart. Under the banner of Martin Luther's rousing "A Mighty Fortress is Our God," people sang their way out of the Roman church. Thus, it is not unusual that both the Methodist and the United Brethren Churches have produced a long and distinguished line of hymnals.

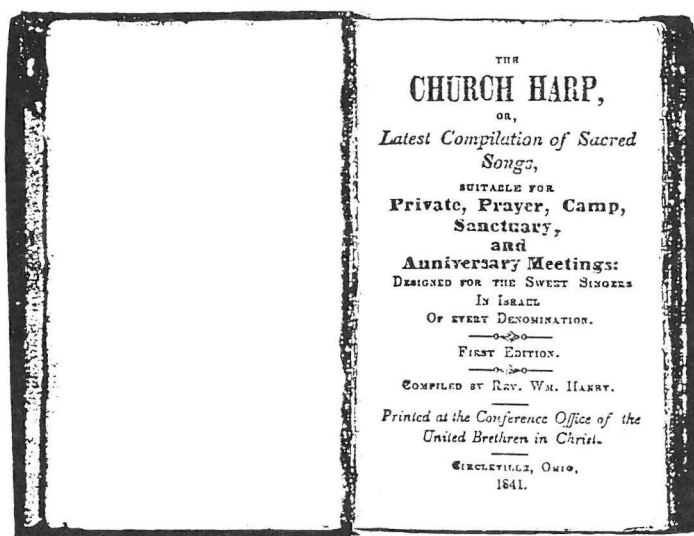
The "collector" and publisher of the first UB hymnal was William Hanby. Licensed to preach in 1831, he began his ministry as a "circuit rider" on the Wolf Creek Circuit of the Scioto Conference, while he lived with his family at Rushville, Ohio. The circuit had twenty-eight appointments, requiring about a month to travel 170 miles to visit them. For his labors he received \$35 a year.

Even without a single day of formal education, he was so successful in his labors that in 1834 he was elected "Presiding Elder." In 1837 he was elected by the General Conference the publishing agent of the Church, in 1839 editor of *The Religious Telescope*, and in 1845 bishop. The headquarters of the UB Church and the Publishing House were then at Circleville, not far from Hanby's home in Rushville.

During the years as a circuit rider, Hanby made music a vital part of his worship or "preaching" services. He began collecting songs, some from his grandparents who had brought them in

memory from England and others from colonists who had migrated into Ohio. In that area there was sung a group of songs called "White Appalachian Spirituals," which Hanby also used. One song, "In De Dark Wood," Hanby learned from a converted Indian preacher named Samson Occum.

There is no indication that William Hanby ever wrote the words for any hymn. He was a compiler of hymns written by others. So *The Church Harp*, or the more popular title, *The Harp*, grew out of his experience and need. It holds a unique place in the story of early American hymnology.



The Harp was received as "church property" by a vote of the General Conference which met in

May 1841, at Dresbach's Meeting House, Pickaway County, Ohio. It was printed in the UB publishing house in Circleville where the house was located until it was moved to Dayton in 1853. In the Preface to the hymnal, the editor wrote:

It [music] is a prominent part of public and special worship, which not only softens the soul for better reception of divine truth, but elevates the affections to things above, teaching us the very language of Heaven The best pieces of all other books of the kind are found in this little volume, together with a number of recent origin In connection with its cheapness . . . it is suited to every orthodox denomination. It is recommended to all the lovers of sacred music.

The fifth edition of *The Harp*, printed in 1852, states in its Preface that "the sale of some forty thousand copies is deemed sufficient apology for presenting this revised edition to a generous public." Since the membership of the denomination was only 40,000 in 1850, it can be seen that the hymnal was graciously accepted.

In the various editions of *The Harp* only the words were printed. The first hymnal with the words and music together did not appear until 1874. However, each hymn had the meter to be used in singing it indicated with C M (common meter), S M (short meter), L M (long meter) and P M (peculiar or irregular meter).

The 1852 hymnal was called a "revised edition" with some excellent songs added. There were 174 hymns in it. Remarkably, not a single Charles Wesley hymn was included although hundreds of them were in circulation at that time. It is also interesting to note that only three of the hymns in *The Harp* are in our new United Methodist hymnal. They are: "Am I a Soldier of the Cross?" words by Isaac Watts with all six of the

stanzas exactly the same in both editions; "Come Ye Disconsolate" by Thomas Moore--in *The Harp* five stanzas are printed but in our new hymnal only three appear; "There is a Fountain Filled with Blood" by William Cowper with the five stanzas in both hymnals the same.

The Harp has two other hymns which were in the last Methodist hymnal, but have been omitted in the new hymnal. They are: "Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken" and "O For a Closer Walk with God." "From Greenland's Icy Mountains" was a favorite missionary hymn in the United Brethren hymnals and also in *The Harp*, but is not in the United Methodist hymnal.

The 1852 *Harp* has the hymns grouped in the index under 29 different subjects and seasons. There is a seven stanza hymn to be used for a foot washing service, four for funerals, two for weddings, two anti-slavery songs, seven under the heading "Backsliding," one patriotic song entitled, "Come, O Ye Americans, Be Thankful to God," and one temperance song.

While the early United Brethren Church was a singing church, it was opposed to the use of choirs and musical instruments. The song leader would "heist" the tune and away the congregation would go. The General Conference of 1861 urged hearty hymn singing but added, "We . . . kindly forbid the introduction of choirs." The General Conference of 1865 banned the use of musical instruments, but the next General Conference watered it down a little by voting, "We earnestly advise our societies to avoid the introduction of choirs and instrumental music."

It has been said that the first organ used in a United Brethren church was in Canal Winchester, Ohio, in 1865 where Bishop Hanby was serving as an interim pastor. His talented son, Benjamin, wrote approximately eighty songs in his brief lifetime before he died at age thirty-three in 1876. Ben was an ordained minister and served two churches--two years at Lewisburg and two years at New Paris, Ohio. In both churches he was dismissed because he used his beloved flute and a piano which he was able to get from the John Church Company in Cincinnati. Fortunately, Ben's music ability has been vindicated and we still sing his "Up on the Housetop," and his best hymn, "Who Is He in Yonder Stall?" is in our new United Methodist hymnal.

Otterbein University, as it was then called, was founded in 1847. In 1852 it purchased its first

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ANNIVERSARIES—1992

March 23, 1812	180th Anniversary of the death of Martin Boehm, Co-founder of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.
June 1767	225th Anniversary of Otterbein and Boehm's discovery that "We are Brethren" in a big meeting on Pentecost in Isaac Long's barn.
July 27, 1752	240th Anniversary of Otterbein's arrival in New York City to become an American German Reformed pastor.
October 14, 1922	70th Anniversary of the merger of Evangelical Association and the United Evangelical Church to form the Evangelical Church.
November 15, 1807	185th Anniversary of first meeting of the "Albright People" near Kleinfeltersville, Pennsylvania.

—Cecil Pottieger

States there is an apparent erosion of the civil rights movement.

The bishop observed that a religious revival is sweeping Eastern Europe, especially in Poland with a very large Roman Catholic population, and in the former Soviet Union where Russian Orthodoxy has just celebrated its first millennium. He stated that the European history of the Evangelical United Brethren and Methodist churches exhibited a close tie between evangelism and social reform with a desire to help people regardless of their religious affiliations. This same emphasis is appropriate to the current religious situation according to the bishop who is in charge of United Methodism's work in the former Soviet Union.

Dr. Paul Mojzes, a native of Yugoslavia and Professor of Religious Studies at Rosemont College, Philadelphia, delivered the closing address of the Consultation. He began by reading the names

of European Methodists who died for their faith under totalitarian suppression in several countries. He continued by noting that seventy years of atheistic propaganda and education have produced a radical discontinuity with the Christendom of the old Europe. He believes this has created a disillusionment with socialism. This, combined with a search for economic alternatives, has created a "kairos" movement or an auspicious creative moment of possible transformation in history.

Professor Mojzes identified three options in relation to the realities in Eastern Europe. These include "secularist absolutism," which has been defunct since 1990; "ecclesiastical absolutism" or a return to the old Christendom preferred by some Eastern European social movements; and "pluralistic liberty" or freedom for all views and practices, which would lead to social stability and diversity. Mojzes believes the third option of pluralistic liberty is a viable option for United Methodists: "I see Methodist Christianity unabashedly proclaiming the love of God through Jesus Christ, calling for a lifestyle of moral renewal in a climate of moral nihilism . . . our denomination should combine the concern of the universal church with the mutual caring of our Methodist expression of Christianity." By claiming this broader vision, "re-evangelization might take place by powerful preaching, education and a thoughtful spirituality."

Dr. Mojzes is an ordained United Methodist minister, a member of the Florida annual conference. An expert and author on Christianity in Eastern Europe, his most recent book, *Religious Liberty in Eastern Europe and the USSR: Before and After the Great Transformation*, has just been issued by Columbia University Press.

In discussion groups Consultation participants identified several possibilities for ministry in a new Europe. These include the need for an Eastern European theological seminary in which English would be the language of instruction; a partner church program linking North American and European congregations; West Germans helping their colleagues in the former East Germany; and the sending of financial support to Eastern European churches as the most effective means of support during the current period of radical adjustment and rebuilding.

If interested, please write the Center for more information on the consultation.

piano, and its teacher, Matilda Carpenter, greatly influenced the life of Benjamin Hanby, then a student at the university. The piano and later a portable organ had a liberalizing effect upon the denomination. The college church met in the college buildings for the first seventy years of its existence. The musical instruments were used in the basement with the young people without much objection. However, without the knowledge of the pastor, but with the permission of the trustees, the organ was once moved upstairs for a meeting. Following the benediction, a weeping sister rushed forward and cried, "That organ has robbed me of my church home, and I want my letter [of transfer]."



Gatherings

We desire to report meetings which bring together persons to keep alive the Evangelical United Brethren heritage in United Methodism. Here are some recent gatherings.

EUB Annual Fellowship in Florida. EUB's have been meeting annually in Florida for a number of years. The most recent meeting was held at Mrs. Appleton's Family Buffet in Sarasota on February 8, 1992. As usual the main feature was renewing acquaintance, but **Mr. Thom Bower**, a UTS Student, gave a presentation on our Center for the EUB Heritage. (A shortened version of this presentation is carried in this issue.) **Mrs. JoAnn Springer** serves as chairperson for this fellowship.

Southeast Ohio Reunion. Ministers and wives, as well as widows, of the former Southeast Conference of the EUB Church met October 24, 1991, in the Tyler Memorial Church, Chillicothe, Ohio, for a reunion. **Dr. M. J. Miller**, a former superintendent of the conference, served as master of ceremonies. After leading the group in a prayer of thanksgiving and a time of remembrance of those who have died, he asked those present to relate their funniest experience in ministry. Before the afternoon ended he asked also for their richest experience. (Surely some of both should be submitted for inclusion in the **Anecdote** column.—Ed.) There were 78 persons present. The noon meal was prepared and served by the

men of the church. The planners of the event, **Rev. Glenn Biddle**, **Rev. Carl Butterbaugh** and **Rev. Gerald Niswender**, were asked to arrange another meeting about the same time in 1992.

UTS Alums Focus on EUB Heritage. For a number of years the Alumni/ae and spouses of eastern conferences (Eastern and Central Pennsylvania and Baltimore) have been meeting for a pre-Lenten retreat with lectures provided by United Theological Seminary faculty. When they met this year March 1 and 2 at the Willow Valley Conference Center, **Dr. James Nelson** gave lectures on the theme "The EUB Way: A Matter of Style." The individual lectures were "Piety: An Ardent Informality," "Polity: A Relaxed Episcopacy," "Property: Assorted Sanctuaries" and "Prospects: A Future for the EUB Way."



European and American Methodists meet in consultation

Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union are in much the same situation as existed 150 years ago, and "I would rather go with my mothers and fathers in the faith who felt that the best way to assist the existing churches in Europe would be to establish Methodist churches that are open for cooperation and not for competition," declared Bishop Ruediger R. Minor in a keynote address at the **Consultation on the Mission of Methodism in a New Europe**, held in conjunction with General Conference and sponsored by the Center. The Consultation which focused on the new religious and political situation in Europe today included a gathering of European delegates to General Conference and selected American United Methodists, who met in Louisville, Kentucky, May 3-4 at Fourth Avenue United Methodist Church.

Bishop Minor noted that the dramatic political changes occurring over the past several years began among young adults who found safe haven in the Protestant churches and who were closely linked with the JPIC (Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation) movement. He also commented on the irony that such civil rights movements in Central and Eastern Europe could peacefully overturn a totalitarian system while in the United



Archival News Notes

◆ The Commission of Archives and History of the Western Pennsylvania Conference published in 1991 *EUB Western Pennsylvania History: An Historical Records Volume*. This contains brief local church histories and a roll of deceased ministers of the Evangelical Association, United Evangelical, UB in Christ, and EUB in Western Pennsylvania, 1799-1971. **Rev. Max Houser** informed the Center for the Evangelical United Brethren Heritage of this volume and **Ms. Helen G. Clear**, the Conference Historian, provided a copy for the Center archives.

◆ **Local Church Histories.** The histories of local churches are basic to the larger histories of the denomination and the church universal, but these are often lost. The Center for the EUB Heritage therefore urges local churches to send to the Center their histories and related material for preservation. Churches in the West Ohio Conference have been urged to send these materials to Ohio Wesleyan College, which maintains the archives of this conference. The EUB Center supports such suggestions for this conference and others which may have similar arrangements. The Center would appreciate also being sent such as are related to the EUB Heritage.

◆ **Melvin Moody** wrote that Dr. B. S. Arnold, who was superintendent of East Ohio Conference for at least 25 years had published a history of Muskingum Conference. The UTS archives has his *History of the East Ohio Conference, UB in Christ*, probably published in 1965. Is this the history to which Dr. Moody alludes, or is there another?

◆ **Daniel Shearer** has been working on family history and photographs and has sent the Center pictures and other materials related to his seminary class and local church history.

◆ **Wayde V. Atwell** has sent a history of *The First United Methodist Church, Chambersburg*, dated September 1984 and the dedication program from Sunday, May 20, 1990.

◆ **Mrs. Mildred Fegley** provided the Center with two interesting items. One was the 1917 *Yearbook* of the United Brethren in Christ, designated as a "Historical Number" and containing considerable information about the church and its institutions at that time. It prompts exploring how many such yearbooks there are in the collection and how far back they go. The other was an even more fascinating piece issued by the official board of the **Trinity United Brethren Church** of Lebanon, Pennsylvania, on July 29, 1896, to state its side of a controversy between the church and conference authorities, provoked by an unhappy appointive process. Controversies over itinerancy are not unusual and this details one such from the local church viewpoint. Such a record is unusual.

◆ The **Center Archives** was recently presented with the hooded, metal covered trunk that UB pioneer circuit rider and Bishop **Christian Newcomer** (1749-1830) carried from Pennsylvania into Ohio. Newcomer is recognized as the premier organizer of the UB Church. The trunk was given by **Robert P. Crist**, pastor of the Hebron [Maine] Community Baptist Church. A student of Bonebrake Seminary from 1944 to 1946, Crist received the trunk from the widow of UB executive **Samuel S. Hough**, editor of *Christian Newcomer: His Life, Journal and Achievements* (Dayton: Board of Administration, Church of the United Brethren in Christ, 1941).



Book review

Abram W. Sangrey, *The Temple of Limestone*. Lancaster, Pennsylvania: The Author, 1991.

This history of Boehm's Chapel, one of the most important landmarks in the history of early Methodism in Pennsylvania, is a reworked edition of Sangrey's 1943 unpublished bachelor of divinity thesis (Lancaster Theological Seminary).

Although the author has attempted to add a more complete list of sources than listed in the original work, and has updated the history to include documentation from the last fifteen years regarding the work of restoring the chapel, the

history essentially covers the period from 1791 to 1943. It chronicles the history of the chapel built on this first piece of ground deeded to the Methodists in Lancaster county.

The first two chapters treat of Martin Boehm and the Boehm family, with particular attention to Henry Boehm, whose *Reminiscences, Historical and Biographical, Sixty-four Years in the Ministry* (New York: Carlton and Porter, 1875), is one of Sangrey's principal sources. Francis Asbury, inasmuch as he stopped at Boehm's farm some twenty-one times, is also a part of this early history. Other chapters treat of the Chapel's beginnings, the period of renewal after the 1850s, the centennial celebration of 1891, the new church building of 1899 and 1907 and the restoration begun in 1975.

Given the fact that early records for institutions like Boehm's Chapel are sparse (J. E. Kessler, pastor from 1867 to 1869, was the first to keep detailed records), Sangrey has done a good job of bringing the available material together. The work is also replete with photographs and reproductions of early paintings. It is, however, unfortunate that the numerous grammatical and spelling errors as well as idiosyncratic capitalizations and forms of citation could not have been corrected before going to press.

Reviewed by Paul Schrodt

Thom Bower discovers the EUB heritage

When I arrived at United Theological Seminary I took a job in the library. This started with shelving books and filing cards. One day the director, Elmer O'Brien, asked if I would do some research for the Center for the Evangelical United Brethren Heritage. Little did I guess at that moment how much that association would affect me.

The Center for the Evangelical United Brethren Heritage, founded in 1978, receives inquiries from persons seeking information from the library's 6,600 volumes of denominational material—publications from the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, The Evangelical Church, The Evangelical Association and the Evangelical United Brethren Church—as well as from the EUB archives (including diaries, correspondence, unpublished biographies and family histories, sermon notes, handwritten manuscripts and pictures from

bishops, ministers, missionaries and other church leaders). I am most familiar with the boxes of papers Bishop Paul Millhouse donated to our archives (although the familiarity comes from carrying them up and down stairs more than from working with their contents).

Usually inquiries come from individuals working on personal projects—genealogical records, information on certain individuals, material for local church histories or research on resolutions of the church. I received these inquiries and answered them as best I could. I have also had an inquiry from a professor researching German Church movements in the United States. He was seeking manuscripts still in the German language that need translation. Another request was from the compilers of an encyclopedia of United Methodist missionaries in Japan seeking information on the 60 United Brethren and Evangelical Church missionaries who had served in Japan.

Many inquiries have focused on early United Brethren history—that period between 1800 and the Civil War. This was the time of the Western Expansion across the Appalachian Mountains into new farmland of the Midwest. The Church of the United Brethren in Christ commissioned persons to go and spread the Word of God to these pioneers and homesteaders. The early "pioneer preachers" were often farmers and homesteaders themselves. They started classes which met in homes (often their own) for the purpose of prayer and instruction. As these classes became cumbersome for private homes, meeting houses were built. Only after a church gained a sizeable population was a recognized preacher assigned to it; up to that point it was laity serving laity. This was the age of the circuit riders, and even the churches that were assigned a minister had to share that minister. In the absence of the minister the laity continued to lead.

The article on the front page of a recent *Telescope-Messenger* prompted me to read about Martin Boehm. Boehm, one of the founders of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ and known for his itinerant, evangelical preaching was by trade a farmer. In fact, it was while plowing he had a religious experience that led to the "Boehm revival" and set him on his course to becoming bishop.

A recent inquiry led me to research a man named Sewell Briggs. He was one of the few circuit riders who was paid to preach. In the 1830s

it was voted that Brother Briggs receive \$50 a year for the circuit he served. This was not much even in that time, but it was not intended to be his livelihood. Briggs was one of the many homesteaders who took leadership in his church.

Pioneer homesteaders were courageous, often cutting into wilderness and turning it into farmland. They struggled through violent winters and failing crops. Often they came from Europe—in our heritage Germany—spoke a different language, with a different culture and customs than their neighbors. It was their faith in God that enabled them to continue. It was their faith that bound them together first as families, then as friends and finally as communities of faith.

I was born in November 1968, about six months after the merger. I have known nothing but a United Methodist Church. Up until a year ago I knew very little of my church's history. During college I traveled with a circus for the summer. The director was, in his own words, a "swallowed up EUB pastor." That was the first time I had heard about a merger. When I entered seminary, I heard a lot more about "The Merger"—from students whose parents were from an Evangelical United Brethren tradition, from professors who were EUB, from the heritage of the school that was United Brethren and then Evangelical United Brethren and then United Methodist. I wondered why this was so important and began to ask questions. I can even recall thinking "Why don't they let this go and celebrate a *United Methodist Church*?"

As I dug into the church records I dug into my own heritage. I learned about the different churches, different families that make up what is now The United Methodist Church. If I am going to celebrate a United Methodist tradition or a United Methodist heritage, I need to know more than Wesley or Asbury; I need Otterbein and Boehm, Albright and Seybert, Showers and Millhouse. I can not call myself a "Methodist," for my church is many Methodist traditions, including the several traditions that make the Evangelical United Brethren heritage, bound into one church.

What I have gained from my work as a researcher is a heritage—a people who have gone before me who make me who I am now. The church had its problems—it had to deal with slavery and war, with new machines that put people out of work; it had to forge an identity for itself amidst a culture whose customs and beliefs

About this issue

Millard J. Miller, a retired pastor and member of this Center's Advisory Board, served in Westerville, Ohio, as well as in denominational leadership positions. He currently lives at Otterbein Home, Otterbein, Ohio.

Copies of *The Harp* are in the Otterbein College Library and in the Hanby House at Westerville, Ohio. The chief source for this paper is *Choose You This Day, The Legacy of the Hanbys* by Dacia Shoemaker, ed. Harold Hancock and Millard J. Miller (Westerville, Ohio: William Caxton Printing Company, 1983).

Cecil P. E. Pottieger served local churches in Eastern Pennsylvania and on the staff of the Board of national Missions of the Evangelical United Brethren Church. He is now retired and resides in Hagerstown, Maryland.

Paul Schrodt is the Assistant Librarian and Assistant Professor at United Theological Seminary.

Thom Bower, a Middler student at United Theological Seminary, graduated from Florida Southern College, Lakeland, Florida. His article is based on a presentation before the February 1992 EUB Annual Fellowship in Florida.

E. Edwin Burtner, Emeritus Professor of Homiletics, United Theological Seminary, lives at Otterbein Home, Lebanon, Ohio.

were very different. These problems have not gone away, although their faces are different now. To see that the church had problems, faced those problems, and lasted longer than those problems is hopeful. To know that I belong to that church—a church that goes beyond today into yesterday—pushes me to belong to a church that faces today and will exist tomorrow. The Center for the Evangelical United Brethren Heritage works with a lot of yesterdays for a more hopeful tomorrow. That heritage cannot easily be dismissed.

Anecdotalage

Two unusual brothers exerted wide influence in the UB Church, and beyond, for more than two decades following the First World War: Arthur R. Clippinger as bishop of the four Ohio conferences of the UB Church, and Walter G. Clippinger, president of Otterbein College. Both were formidably dignified men who took rules and forms quite seriously as they discharged their varied public responsibilities. Many knew only their stern mien. The following reminiscences illustrate characteristics that should be added to prevailing impressions.

President Clippinger had a rather surprising part in this writer's first formal step into the ministry. At that time in the UB Church, once one declared an intention to become a minister, the first step was to apply to the Quarterly Conference of one's home church for a license to preach. My decision to become a minister climaxed a period of skepticism and vocational uncertainty, and I had troubling doubt about certain items in the Confession of Faith set forth in the Discipline. When the Conference Superintendent asked if I accepted the confession, I replied, as counselled by my minister, that I did but with the exception of three articles. This roused considerable discussion, some pained, some supportive.

At this point President Clippinger, a faithful participant in the work and worship of the congregation, rose to say that he had participated in many Annual Conference examinations of candidates for ordination. In all of them he had never heard anything but "Yes, yes," and he was tired of

it. This was refreshing. He welcomed signs of independent thinking, and he declared his readiness to support a motion to approve granting the license. In speaking thus, the President indicated a sympathetic interest in a young person's struggle for faith. His gesture gains significance in the light of the distrust of a trained ministry in parts of the church where the college he headed needed all the support it could find in the days of the depression.

The writer also had the privilege of being pastor of the church Bishop Clippinger had served just prior to his election as a Conference Superintendent and then later as a bishop. It was the church in which he continued to work and worship until his death.

Two or three years before, I had joined with other members of an Annual Conference committee in a sharp, open, almost defiant rejection of a proposal he had supported before them. Yet I never detected the slightest indication of pique toward any of the committee. Indeed, as my pastorate in "his" church lengthened, he would confide how ye yearned for the welfare of all the ministers and their families, including those who had criticized or opposed him, and especially those who seemed to be their own worst enemies in their pastorates. Known for his firm parliamentary and administrative style, known also for taxing involvement in the merger of the UB and the Evangelical Churches, and for labors in extra-denominational causes, he should be remembered also for the burden he carried for the lives of the ministers he was obliged by church order to "station" year by year.

E. Edwin Burtner

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